



Mold Remediation and Indoor Air Quality Improvement

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NEW MEXICO
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Guide to Hiring Home Remediation Professionals

Have you discovered a mold or other indoor air quality issue in your home and now need a professional service to address the problem? This guide and the accompanying listing of remediation professionals will help you navigate the process.

1. Carefully describe the problem. Once you narrow your selection and make the phone call, try to avoid guessing what is causing the problem. Instead, as clearly as possible say what the specific nature of the problem is. Start with a brief, concise description, such as one of the following:

- *I can see mold, what should I do?*
- *I don't see mold but I smell it. How can I tell if the odor is or isn't mold?*
- *I don't see mold but I haven't been feeling well in my house lately. Can you test for things besides mold?*

An initial statement like this will often forward you to someone else in the company based on this information.

2. Find out what the business can do and what it will charge.

Some of these items are addressed in the list, but it is important to confirm the information is still relevant and accurate. Ask the following questions and others you think are appropriate:

- *What is your company's experience in diagnosing problems of this nature?*
- *What are the qualifications of the personnel who would perform the work?*
- *How much will it cost? Do you require a deposit?*

- *Is the laboratory analyzing the field samples accredited by the American Industrial Hygiene Association? (<http://www.aiha.org/>)*

- *How long has your company been in business?*

- *How long has your company done this type of work?*

3. Find out what "certified" means.

The use of the word "certified" is often misrepresented or misleading. This term is often applied to mean "the company" even when only one individual in the company is certified. The workers or mold inspectors going to your home may not be. Furthermore, it's important that certification be acquired from an organization independent of the one they went to for any training. The only independent organization currently in existence is the American Council for Accredited Certification. See, <http://www.acac.org/>.

- Ask if the mold inspectors or mold remediation workers that will be coming to your home are individually certified.
- Ask where they got their certifications and check out the certification organization.

4. Be certain you are getting the services you need:

- Ask the company representative to explain the nature of the diagnosis and/or mitigation they will perform.
- Be sure they have explained any test methods they will use so you can

understand it.

- Don't be pressed by an Indoor Air Quality professional into the use of expensive testing, unless it can be fully explained why this information is needed to solve your problem. Don't insist they do testing when they feel that the results are not likely to give you information you really need.

5. Check References and Complaints.

Companies with long histories and established physical addresses are easier for a person to check:

- Ask for a copy of the company's liability insurance policy. Make sure it includes "Microbial Contracting and Consulting".

There are some companies operating without insurance for "mold" work. They have general liability insurance but it does not include mold or environmental work.

- Always ask for references. Clients who have used the company's services can verify the company is able to provide the services they claim and that they were satisfied with the quality of the services.
- To determine if unresolved complaints have been lodged against a business, you can contact your local Better Business Bureau (listed in the phone book) or www.newmexicoandsouthwestcolorado.bbb.org. You may also contact the Consumer Protection Division in the Office of the Attorney General: www.nmag.gov/office/Divisions/CP/ or call them at 1-800-678-1508. Report any instances of fraud or misrepresentation to the organizations mentioned above. They can also assist you in resolving disputes or conflicts, if these develop.

6. Check for Conflicts of Interest.

Be aware that businesses selling mitigation devices as their main business may have a conflict of interest. For example, they may tend to develop their diagnoses and recommendations based on the use of their mitigation devices or services.

- Find out if the business also sells mitigation services or devices, such as air duct cleaning services or air cleaners. Reconsider hiring any business that misrepresents itself as having been endorsed in any way by virtue of its inclusion in this list.

7. Obtain a written contract:

- Carefully read the contract to make sure the services the business/consultant will provide are clearly described and the charges are fully defined.
- Be certain you and the business/consultant are in agreement on what kind of report you will receive and when. Understand that you will pay more when you need results "immediately".
- In the case of mitigation service, verify whether there are warranties to retest or continue services to resolve problems, if they recur.

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